

Northampton Policing Review Commission:

Spending and Contracts Subcommittee

To join the remote meeting: • Video conference:

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 7, 2020 6:00PM - 8:00PM Remote Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93415623937?pwd=VkZXMUdEaTZJYk9OS3VBY05xc1Btdz09> Meeting

ID: 934 1562 3937 Password: 834165 • **Or by telephone, call:** +1 929 436 2866

1. Call to Order
 - Announcement of Zoom Recording
 - Roll Call
2. Public comment (30 minutes)
3. Discussion of state of the budget information
4. Discussion of progress reporting and submitting material for the Preliminary report
5. Election of new chair
6. Approval of Meeting Minutes
7. New Business
8. Adjourn

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Daniel Cannity at 6:06 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING

That this meeting is being recorded for the public record and would be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

Roll Call

Lois Ahrens Present

Daniel Cannity Present

City Councilor Michael Quinlan Present

Josey Rosales Present

Commissioner Dan Cannity explained how public comment will work for the meeting including the raising hand and chat feature.

2. Public Comment

Henry Morgan (community member) said if the commission chooses to reallocate funding from the department, the funding should be reallocated to help the most vulnerable members of the Northampton community, including supporting addiction treatment centers, and access to public water.

3. Discussion of State of the Budget Information

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said Henry Morgan is right in thinking about mitigating crime with the reallocation funds. He said there seems to be money to put toward programming to help the community. He said he learned that 80% (estimate) of people in prisons suffer from some sort of mental health disorder and 20-25% of calls that are made to the department, are mental health calls. He explained further if 20% of the calls are leading to 80% of the jail population, there's a problem. He said he appreciates Henry Morgan's comment as well as comments made at the public hearing talking about funding that is already available to help jumpstart pilot programs.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens cautioned the committee against the "crime" terminology because often "crime" is really behavior that is criminalized rather than being a crime itself. She said people keep talking about being afraid of crime, but we don't know if people are always convicted after they are arrested and that the data does not specify. She said a lot of what we're seeing in Northampton is actually people being criminalized. She agreed that there is money that could be used either from detail work, as well as civil asset forfeiture that could be reallocated to services that negate criminalized behavior. She said it is important in terms of this funding, that the recommendation clearly states where the commission thinks the funding should go.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the logs are barebones and aren't specific. He said he asked the department again for data that specifies officer time and frequency.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens agreed that this data is important and said she's tried to ask for this data before and haven't gotten it.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it would be helpful to see what the police are doing so the commission can recommend in terms of services that can be moved elsewhere.

Commissioner Dan Cannity welcomed Josey Rosales to the meeting.
Commissioner Dan Cannity said when anyone uses the word police, it means different things.

He explained, it means an individual officer, local departments, policing as a large infrastructure, and it can be a stand in for crisis call, and sometimes people are just happy someone responded to the call. He said unpacking what the commission means by policing, is important as it is connected to many other things. He said in terms of talking about what things cost, it becomes harder to understand where these value dollars are. He said people were concerned that the city cut funding, and that it made people feel unsafe. He said it's important to reassure folks that the community can still be safe. He said often police are responding to quality of life calls like building checks and loitering which is wrong for many reasons. He suggested the commission look at what interventions work to reduce the police footprint which costs less for the department, and that crisis response can be done differently.

He wondered what it would mean to have a new department of community care responses and what does a new department need for funding, and where can it come from, even if this new department can grow over time in a responsible way. He also mentioned the possibility of suggesting microgrants for quality of life that groups and organizations can apply for.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said it is worth asking how effective policing itself as well as what the likelihood of a person who is arrested, is able to be reintegrated into the community. They wondered what portion of the department is composed of people who are residents of Northampton to consider how tax dollars are paying for salaries of officers who are not from this community, which is actively pulling money away from Northampton's schools. They said the 10% already defunded is not a substantive amount to prove the efficacy of this defunding process, and will not build a new department to slowly replace some of the functions of the police department.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said It's hard to say what the new cost of that department might be and that it's possible that the new department could also seek other funding in addition to funding from the city whether that's creating new housing, or finding people to help people find housing. She mentioned the arts council gives away grants and that there is a system they've used to give resources to people who need it, which could be a model for what the commission does in terms of reallocating funds. She said there would need to be a staff person as well as a community board so that the department is attached to the people whose mission it is to serve. People living in community together creates public safety.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said in terms of imagining a new department, the commission will have to plan to be as flexible as possible with the funding, for instance having a small staff to develop the pilot program, and paying attention to setting up a successful transition, as well as creating a system of emergency call responses. He said with this insight, the commission could recommend funding for a pilot.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said this conversation is connected to the Alternatives to Policing committee's work and that maybe these topics can be folded into one another.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan wondered whether having a joint subcommittee meeting with

the Alternatives subcommittee might be helpful to have a more in depth conversation though he admitted the large group is difficult. He mentioned there are a lot of alternatives suggested in terms of models. He said people are scared when they don't understand the conversation about the alternative and that he hasn't had a great answer for those people. He said presenting those alternatives is going to be key to the success of the commission in order to convince the mayor and the people of Northampton that this is a viable safe alternative.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said Northampton crime (however one defines it) is down, and that when we talk about police being there to keep us safe, very little is ongoing violent crime. He said it's important to rebrand what crisis response is and then creating the structure to support the new crisis response.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the Alternatives to Policing subcommittee is looking into what services they say they're offering and a lot of times these tasks came from defunding other city services. He said it's important to think about what good infrastructure looks like and to define this well, in order to name the action steps it would take. He said it might be worthwhile to start looking into what some of the alternatives might cost and exploring what the process of jumpstarting different city funds has looked like.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said it costs about \$70,000 a year to keep someone in jail. She said maybe instead we should give people a car, tuition, rent and \$70,000 worth of things to stabilize themselves and to give people an opportunity. She said ideas like this (like giving people a guaranteed income) requires unpacking scarcity thinking. She said suggesting an idea that is bigger rather than smaller is a good idea. She suggested the committee come up with a five year plan and to think about what can be built, so that instead of having a negative frame of what is being taken away, it can be about what we're creating for the community so a much larger community can feel safe.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said people are most vulnerable because we haven't invested in them. If we want change, the commission has to be the thing that interrupts this. He said if the commission reduces the footprint of the police, it limits the number of people who enter that system to begin with, which means needing less and better infrastructure. He said it's important to think about the ways the financial arguments can be brought into the larger report will be important even if it's the reminder that this all costs money, and that we can invest in other things. He said making a financially literate argument for how we're reallocating these funds will be important.

4. Discussion of progress reporting and submitting material for the Preliminary report

Commissioner Lois Ahrens wondered about the process for collaboratively working on the report.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it's hard to do collaborative work and respect open meeting

law, but that they can build out a report by having a meeting of collaborative writing in a document where commissioners can synthesize their writing.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said he has experience working with one or two people in this way. He said he thinks the committee has a great frame with what Commissioner Lois already wrote.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens wondered if there are more numbers the committee needs.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said he thinks looking at the older budgets at the wage and hiring freeze is important because that happened when the city was going through a hard time, and we're in a hard time again.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said it's important to contextualize the numbers to better understand where there is room for reinvestment. He said the committee has responsibility to make a moral value argument for why funding and responsibilities should be transferred into another project.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said there needs to be a key in the data.

Commissioner Michael Quinlan said if there was a key in the budget it would be even longer.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said moving forward, identifying the important numbers and adding important context seems like the next step and that they might not need more numbers.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said without context, people might not know otherwise how many property checks there are.

The commissioners talk about the reporting deadline timeline.

9. Election of new chair

Commissioner Dan Cannity said finding a replacement for Carmen would be difficult at this stage in the process. He said the committee needs a new subcommittee chair.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens asked what the duties of the commissioner are.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said the duties include facilitating meetings, deciding the agenda, and making sure the agenda gets to Noa to be posted at least two business days before the meeting occurs.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said he doesn't mind doing it, but might need a push to complete the agenda.

The commissioners discuss commissioner Josey Rosales being the chair.

Commissioner Dan Cannity moved to elect commissioner Josey Rosales. The motion is moved unanimously.

10.New Business

The commissioners set the agenda for the next subcommittee meeting to include working on the report, excluding public comment for this upcoming working meeting.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said community members can make public comment by emailing Noa Coffey-Moore for the upcoming working meeting.

11.Approval of Meeting Minutes

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|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 11/23 | Spending & Contracts Meeting Minutes |
| 11/17 | Spending & Contracts Meeting minutes |

Commissioner Josey Rosales moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Michael Quinland seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes is passed unanimously.

5. Adjourn

Commissioner Josey Rosales moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Commissioner Dan Cannity seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.